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09/548,465	04/13/2000	Robert F. Bencini	15916-261	7431
<div>7590 11/14/2008</div> <div>Henricks Slavin & Holmes LLP</div> <div>840 Apollo Street</div> <div>Suite 200</div> <div>El Segundo, CA 90245</div>				
EXAMINER				
SCHELL, LAURA C				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3767				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/548,465

Applicant(s)

BENCINI ET AL.

Examiner

LAURA C. SCHELL

Art Unit

3767

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 August 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 45, 47, 48, 50-54, 65, 66, 68-71, 73-81, 83-87, 89, 90 and 92-101 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 45, 47, 48, 50-54, 65, 66, 68-71, 73-81, 83-87, 89, 90, 92-101 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/12/08
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 45 and 79 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Umeda (US Patent No. 5,255,668). Umeda discloses an apparatus (figs. 1-5) comprising: an elongate body (9) defining a proximal portion (near 50) and a distal portion (near 40) and including a wall defining an inner surface, an outer surface and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (35); a steering wire (8a/8b) having a distal portion (near 40); an anchoring member (40 is connected to the tip and connected to 8a/8b as well as 10 via 20) of the elongate body, configured such that it does not obstruct the aperture in the distal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 5 discloses that 40 is a tube so that it does not obstruct 35), and directly secured to the steering wire (col. 6, line 68 through col. 7, line 3); means, directly connected to the anchoring member for preventing compression of the elongate body

distal portion during bending of the elongate body distal portion (10); and a tubular member that is a partial circle in cross-section (50, because of slots 51a and 51b, this cross section is a partial circle) and has a slot (the interior passage of 50 that extends along the axis is being interpreted as the slot, as Applicant has not defined how the "slot" is positioned with respect to the tubular member or any other structural elements unique to the slot) in which a portion of the steering wire is located (Fig. 2 discloses that both steering wires are located with the slot of 50) positioned relative to the means for preventing compression so as to prevent the means for preventing compression from tearing through the elongate body when the means for preventing compression bends (this can be considered the anti-tear device equivalent to the applicant's anti-tear device, and furthermore, provides the same function of the anti-tear device, to spread out the force and stress placed on the steering wire).

In reference to claim 79, Umeda discloses that the elongate body defines a longitudinal axis (Figs. 1 and 2); the steering wire and the means for preventing compression are radially offset from the longitudinal axis (Fig. 2); and the steering wire and the means for preventing compression are substantially diametrically opposed from one another (Fig. 2).

Claims 52-54 and 86 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Umeda (US Patent No. 5,255,668). Umeda discloses an apparatus (figs. 1-5) comprising: an elongate body (9) defining a proximal portion (near 50) and a distal

portion (near 40) and including a wall defining an inner surface, an outer surface and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (35); a steering wire (8a/8b) having a distal portion (near 40) operably connected to the distal portion of the elongate body (connected to 40 which is connected to the elongate body; Figs. 2 and 4); a stiffening member (10) associated with the distal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 2); and a substantially c-shaped anti-tear device (50, because of slots 51a and 51b, this cross section is a partial circle/c-shaped) with a slot (the slot is being interpreted as the opening within 50/the interior passage of 50 that extends along the axis is being interpreted as the slot, as Applicant has not defined how the "slot" is positioned with respect to the tubular member or any other structural elements unique to the slot) associated with the stiffening member (this can be considered the anti-tear device equivalent to the applicant's anti-tear device, and furthermore, provides the same function of the anti-tear device, to spread out the force and stress placed on the steering wire); wherein a portion of the steering wire is positioned within the slot (Fig. 2 discloses that both steering wires are located with the slot of 50).

In reference to claim 53, Umeda discloses that the elongate body defines a longitudinal axis and the stiffening member extends less than entirely around the longitudinal axis (Fig. 2).

In reference to claim 54, Umeda discloses that the anti-tear device extends further around the longitudinal axis than the stiffening member (Fig. 2).

In reference to claim 86, Umeda discloses that the elongate body defines a longitudinal axis (Fig. 2); the steering wire and the stiffening member are radially offset

from the longitudinal axis (Fig. 2); and the steering wire and the stiffening member are substantially diametrically opposed from one another (Fig. 2).

Claims 47, 48, 50, 51, 80 and 81 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mueller et al. (US Patent No. 6,554,794). Mueller discloses an apparatus (Figs. 5-7f) comprising: an elongate body (Fig. 5) defining a proximal portion (near 400 for example) and a distal portion (near 118) and including a wall (Figs. 7a and 7c, wall is 106) defining an inner surface, an outer surface (Fig. 7c discloses the interior and exterior surface of 106) and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (aperture at distal end of 118); a stiffening member (132) associated with the distal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 7a discloses that 132 extends towards the distal end); an anti-tear device (130) positioned within the elongate body wall between the inner surface and the outside surface adjacent to at least a portion of the stiffening member (130 is adjacent 132), and configured to prevent the stiffening member from tearing through the elongate body when the stiffening member bends (Figs. 7a-7c disclose that stiffening member is located within 130 and therefore 130 will prevent the stiffening member from tearing the device when it bends); and a steering wire (steering wire is 122) which is not connected to the anti-tear device and which is not located within the stiffening member (122 is neither connected to 130 nor located within 132), having a distal portion operably connected to the distal portion of the

elongate body (Fig. 7ee discloses that 122 is connected to 114, alternatively Fig. 7bb discloses that 122 is connected at connection point 137).

In reference to claim 48, Mueller discloses that the anti-tear device is secured to the stiffening member (Fig. 7cc).

In reference to claim 50, Mueller discloses that the anti-tear device is a tubular member (130 is a tubular member).

In reference to claim 51, Mueller discloses that the anti-tear device is a tubular member with a slot (130 have several different slots).

In reference to claim 80, Mueller discloses that the distal portion of the steering wire is secured to the elongate body at a location within the wall between the inner and the outer surface (Fig. 7e).

In reference to claim 81, Mueller discloses that the stiffening member is located within the elongate body wall between the inner and the outer surface (Fig. 7e).

Claims 65, 66 and 87 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mueller et al. (US Patent No. 6,554,794). Mueller discloses an apparatus (Figs. 5-7f) comprising: an elongate body (Fig. 5) defining a proximal portion (near 400 for example) and a distal portion (near 118) and including a wall (Figs. 7a and 7c, wall is 106) defining an inner surface, an outer surface (Fig. 7c discloses the interior and exterior surface of 106) and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the

distal portion (aperture at distal end of 118); a steering wire (122) having a distal portion that is located within the elongate body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface and is operably connected to the distal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 7e); a stiffening member (132) associated with the distal portion of the elongate body and defining a proximal end (Figs. 7a and 7bb); and an anti-tear device (130) defining a proximal end and a distal end (Figs. 7a-7f) secured to the proximal end of the stiffening member (Fig. 7cc discloses that 130 and 132 are connected via the wall material between them. They are being interpreted as being connected as the wall material adheres to and immobilizes both the stiffening member 132 and the anti-tear device 130 and therefore can be said to connect them. Please note that Applicant has not claimed how these structures are connected.) such that the proximal end of the anti-tear device is located within the distal portion of the elongate body wall between the inner and outer surface (Fig. 7c); wherein the elongate body defines a distal end and at least a portion of the stiffening member is located proximal of the distal end of the elongate body (Figs. 7a-7f); and wherein the stiffening wire is not directly connected to the anti-tear device (Fig. 7cc).

In reference to claim 66, Mueller discloses that the elongate body defines a diameter and the stiffening member and the distal portion of the steering wire are substantially diametrically opposed from one another (Fig. 7cc).

In reference to claim 87, Mueller discloses the stiffening member is located within the elongate body wall between the inner and outer surface (Fig. 7e).

Claims 68, 89, 90 and 98 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mueller et al. (US Patent No. 6,554,794). Mueller discloses an apparatus (Figs. 5-7f) comprising: an elongate body (Fig. 5) defining a proximal portion (near 400 for example) and a distal portion (near 118) and including a wall (Figs. 7a and 7c, wall is 106) defining an inner surface, an outer surface (Fig. 7c discloses the interior and exterior surface of 106) and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (aperture at distal end of 118); a stiffening member (132) associated with the distal portion of the elongate body such that the stiffening member will apply a force over an elongate body surface area when the stiffening member is bent (Figs. 7a-7f); anti-tear means (130) associated with the stiffening member and located within the elongate body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface (Fig. 7c), for increasing the elongate body surface area over which the force is applied when the stiffening member is bent to prevent the stiffening member from tearing through the elongate body (132 is located within 130 and therefore 130 prevents 132 from tearing through the device); and a steering wire (122) which is not connected to the anti-tear means having a distal portion operably connected to the distal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 7ee discloses that 122 is connected to 114, alternatively Fig. 7bb discloses that 122 is connected at connection point 137).

In reference to claim 89, Mueller discloses at least a portion of the steering wire is located within the elongate body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface (Fig. 7e).

In reference to claim 90, Mueller discloses that the stiffening member is located within the elongate body member wall between the inner surface and the outer surface (Fig. 7e).

In reference to claim 98, Mueller discloses that the elongate body distal portion defines a longitudinal axis and the stiffening member and the distal portion of the steering wire are offset from one another by about 180 degrees about the longitudinal axis (Fig. 7e).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 69, 73, 74 and 92 and 99 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuura et al. (US Patent No. 6,450,948) in view of Savage et al.

(US Patent No. 5,507,725). Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed including an apparatus (Figs. 1-13 for example) comprising: an elongate body (40) defining a proximal portion (near 22) and a distal portion (near 28) and including a wall defining an inner surface, an outer surface and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (Fig. 1 discloses the aperture as the opening in 40 which allows 28 to extend from and Fig. 4 discloses that the lumen is 34, also seen in Fig. 1); a steering wire (56 in the embodiment in Figs. 11 and 12 it is labeled as 356) having a distal portion; an anchoring member located in the distal portion of the elongate body and secured to the steering wire (Figs. 2-6 and 11, 50b/350b); a stiffening member (54a, 54b/354a, 354b) associated with the distal portion of the elongated body and defining a distal end (distal end is within 50b/350b), the distal end of the stiffening member being directly secured to the anchoring member (Figs. 2-6 and 11); and a substantially tubular member directly secured to the stiffening member and defining a continuous length in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis (50a/350a) and a wall thickness, the continuous length being substantially greater than the wall thickness (50a/350a is longer than the wall thickness); wherein the steering wire is movable relative to the tubular member (Fig. 4 discloses that the steering wire passes through anti-tear device freely; col. 4, lines 6-9 and col. 4, lines 14-17). Matsuura, however, does not disclose that the anchoring member is located within the body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are

positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

In reference to claim 73, Matsuura discloses a handle, operably connected to the elongate body and to the steering wire, adapted to pull the steering wire relative to the elongate body (Fig. 1).

In reference to claim 74, Matsuura discloses that the steering wire extends to the proximal portion of the elongate body and is movable relative to the proximal portion of the elongate body (Fig. 4 discloses that the steering wire passes through anti-tear device freely; col. 4, lines 6-9 and col. 4, lines 14-17).

In reference to claim 92, Matsuura discloses that the anchoring member (50b/350b) is directly secured to the steering wire (Fig. 4).

In reference to claim 99, Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed except for the tubular member being located within the body wall between the inner and outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening

members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

Claims 70, 93, 94 and 100 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuura et al. (US Patent No. 6,450,948) in view of Savage et al. (US Patent No. 5,507,725). Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed including an apparatus (Figs. 1-13 for example) comprising: an elongate body (40) defining a proximal portion (near 22) and a distal portion (near 28) and including a wall defining an inner surface, an outer surface and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (Fig. 1 discloses the aperture as the opening in 40 which allows 28 to extend from and Fig. 4 discloses that the lumen is 34, also seen in Fig. 1); a steering wire (56 in the embodiment in Figs. 11 and 12 it is labeled as 356) having a distal portion; an anchoring member located in the distal portion of the

elongate body and secured to the steering wire (Figs. 2-6 and 11, 50b/350b); a stiffening member (54a, 54b/354a, 354b) associated with the distal portion of the elongated body and defining a distal end (distal end is within 50b/350b), the distal end of the stiffening member being directly secured to the anchoring member (Figs. 2-6 and 11); and a substantially tubular member (50a/350a), including a slot (Fig. 4 discloses that 50b has a slot which 56 fits within. Please note there is no other structure claimed with respect to the slot), secured to the stiffening member (Fig. 5) and defining a continuous length in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis (50a/350a) and a wall thickness, the continuous length being substantially greater than the wall thickness (50a/350a is longer than the wall thickness). Matsuura, however, does not disclose that the anchoring member is located within the body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

In reference to claim 93, Matsuura discloses the anchoring member is directly secured to the steering wire (Fig. 4).

In reference to claim 94, Matsuura discloses the substantially tubular member is directly secured to the stiffening member (Fig. 5).

In reference to claim 100, Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed except for the tubular member being located within the body wall between the inner and outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

Claims 71, 95, 96 and 101 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuura et al. (US Patent No. 6,450,948) in view of Savage et al. (US Patent No. 5,507,725). Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed

including an apparatus (Figs. 1-13 for example) comprising: an elongate body (40) defining a proximal portion (near 22) and a distal portion (near 28) and including a wall defining an inner surface, an outer surface and a lumen extending from the proximal portion to an aperture in the distal portion (Fig. 1 discloses the aperture as the opening in 40 which allows 28 to extend from and Fig. 4 discloses that the lumen is 34, also seen in Fig. 1); a steering wire (56 in the embodiment in Figs. 11 and 12 it is labeled as 356) having a distal portion; an anchoring member located in the distal portion of the elongate body and secured to the steering wire (Figs. 2-6 and 11, 50b/350b); a stiffening member (54a, 54b/354a, 354b) associated with the distal portion of the elongated body and defining a distal end (distal end is within 50b/350b), the distal end of the stiffening member being directly secured to the anchoring member (Figs. 2-6 and 11); and a substantially tubular member (50a/350a), which extends less than completely around the longitudinal axis (because of slot which 56 resides in, it can be said that 50a/350a extends less than completely around the longitudinal axis), secured to the stiffening member (Fig. 5) and defining a continuous length in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis (50a/350a) and a wall thickness, the continuous length being substantially greater than the wall thickness (50a/350a is longer than the wall thickness). Matsuura, however, does not disclose that the anchoring member is located within the body wall between the inner surface and the outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer

and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

In reference to claim 95, Matsuura discloses that the anchoring member is directly secured to the steering wire (Fig. 4).

In reference to claim 96, Matsuura discloses the substantially tubular member is directly secured to the stiffening member (Fig. 5).

In reference to claim 101, Matsuura discloses the device substantially as claimed except for the tubular member being located within the body wall between the inner and outer surface. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Matsuura by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing

two different materials end to end as Matsuura does in Figs. 2, 4 and 5, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device.

Claims 75-78 and 83-85 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Umeda (US Patent No. 5,255,668) in view of Savage et al. (US Patent No. 5,507,725). Umeda discloses the device substantially as claimed except for the steering wire, stiffening member and anti-tear device being located in the body wall. Savage, however, discloses a similar device with similar support/steering structure (Figs. 7-18). Savage also discloses that these anchoring devices, stiffening members, anti-tear members and steering wires are positioned within the catheter wall, between the outer and inner surfaces of the wall (col. 6, lines 16-40). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Umeda by placing the entirety of the steering/anti-tear/stiffening structures within the wall of the catheter, as taught by Savage, as this wall surrounding the structures keeps the structures operational together and firmly in place and is a stronger body than fusing two different materials end to end as Umeda teaches, for example, as these bonds would be subject to stresses when bending along their bond joint, whereas having a wall that surrounds this joint would provide a stronger device, as well as for the purpose of allowing the size of the lumen to be larger and object-free in order to allow more versatility in use of the device.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 47, 48, 50, 51, 65, 66, 66-71, 73-78, 80-81, 83-85, 87, 89, 90, 92-101 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

With respect to claims 45, 52-54, 79 and 86, the original rejection under the Umeda reference has been maintained and clarified, as it is the examiner's opinion that Umeda does teach the steering wire being located within a slot. Please see the rejection above.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LAURA C. SCHELL whose telephone number is (571)272-7881. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kevin Simons can be reached on (571) 272-4965. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Laura C Schell/
Examiner, Art Unit 3767
/Kevin C. Simmons/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3767